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ABSTRACT

These two newsletters focus on two issues concerning full inclusion for young children with disabilities: the debate over developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in inclusive preschool classrooms, and optimal classroom environments for inclusive early childhood settings. The first newsletter includes: a review of three articles addressing DAP; a description of First CHANCE (Children with Handicaps Assisted and Nurtured in Childcare Environments), which is a federally funded model inservice project to support child care providers and educators implementing inclusive practices; a description of a technical assistance project on preventing severe challenging behavior in preschool children; and a summary of principles advocated by the Community Integration Project. The second issue includes: practical suggestions from the literature for maximizing children's engagement in play and social interaction; a description of the Family Child Care Integration Project (which trains family home care providers to include children with special needs); a description of Project Coach Outreach (which provides training in coaching and consultation skills to increase inclusive, community-based services for preschoolers with disabilities in Mississippi); and suggestions from the Education Home Model Outreach Project. (DB)

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Inclusion Forum

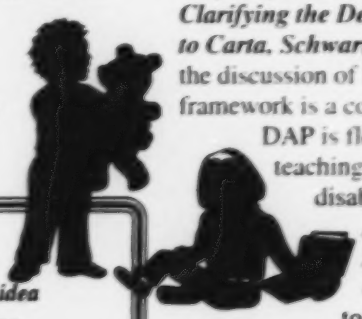
CIP/George Washington University Information Line

Spring/Summer 1993 Vol. 1, No. 1

SPOTLIGHT ON INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

DAP's Usefulness in Inclusive Settings: A Review

The current efforts of educators to develop models for inclusive preschool classrooms has added fuel to the lively debate concerning Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP). The question that continually surfaces is whether or not instructional practices associated with developmentally appropriate programs are effective in educating young children with disabilities. Of the many articles written on this topic, some serve to remind us of the original purpose of DAP, and in doing so respond to this question. In ***Redeveloping Early Education: A Response to Kessler***, Bredekamp (1991) argues that NAEYC's goal in developing a written position was to "define the concept of developmentally appropriate." Developmentally appropriate practice was not intended to replace but to join with other indicators of quality education. Johnson and Johnson (1992) in ***Clarifying the Developmental Perspective in Response to Carta, Schwartz, Atwater, and McConnell*** continue the discussion of DAP's role. Implicit in DAP's framework is a continuum of instructional practices.



DAP is flexible enough to accommodate many teaching strategies effective for children with disabilities. Kostelnik (1992) in ***Myths Associated with Developmentally Appropriate Programs*** examines some of the erroneous interpretations applied to DAP. She argues that one reason myths surround DAP may be that people are attempting to "make finite and absolute a concept that is in fact open-ended and amenable to many variations." The author cautions us not to treat DAP as a specific technology. In the words of Johnson and Johnson (1992), DAP is a "living document."

All three articles suggest that DAP is to be enhanced with complimentary knowledge and practice from related disciplines. As inclusive pre-school models are implemented and evaluated, involved professionals will be able to more accurately answer questions regarding the effectiveness of DAP in educating young children with disabilities. For the present, we must consider that inclusive programs enroll students who are first and foremost children regardless of their risk status. Merging DAP with other standards of education excellence when developing inclusive models insures that the developmental as well as educational needs of these children are addressed.

—Marie Abraham
Community Integration Project

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Bredekamp, S. (1991). Redeveloping early childhood educations: A Response to Kessler. ***Early Childhood Research Quarterly***, 6, 199-209

Johnson, J.L. and Johnson, K.M. (1992). Clarifying the developmental perspective in response to Carta, Schwartz, Atwater, and McConnell. ***Topics in Early Childhood Special Education***, 12(4), 439-457

Kostelnik, M. (1992). Myths associated with developmentally appropriate programs. ***Young Children***, 47(4), 17-23

From the Director . . .

Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it is the only one you have . . .
Emile Chartier, a French Philosopher

Inclusion—what is it? How do you do it? Am I doing it right? These are questions the staff of the Community Integration Project are often asked. Anxious eyes of teachers participating in our training reflect a desire to know the True Way to Inclusion. In our work as a federally funded outreach project designed to increase opportunities for young children with disabilities to be included in early childhood programs, we know there is no True Way—there are only options. But what are those options, who has tried them, and how successful are they?

***Inclusion Forum*, a semi-annual topical newsletter, is a medium for open discussion about inclusion. Its intent is to share information and promote networking among practitioners interested in the idea of inclusive early childhood education. Each edition will feature a review of current literature, implementation strategies offered by programs across the country and a resource bulletin board. We hope the Inclusion Forum is a useful resource as you work to create programs that allow all children to learn and grow together.**

—Penny Wald
Community Integration Project

EC 302944

INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES: Finding Another Way

Including children of diverse abilities and cultural backgrounds into community-based early childhood programs benefits everyone involved — children, families, and staff alike. This is the premise behind First CHANCE (Children with Handicaps Assisted and Nurtured in Childcare Environments), a federally funded model inservice project to support child care providers and other early childhood professionals with inclusion. First CHANCE provides continuing education courses, workshops on child development, family participation and integration, technical assistance for working with children with disabilities, and trainer seminars to prepare early childhood professionals to become integration resources within their own communities.

Inclusion involves placing children with disabilities into existing child care programs and other early childhood settings — but that is only the beginning. It works best when all children are actively encouraged to participate to their fullest potential .

First CHANCE staff work with local early childhood providers to devise and implement teaching strategies that maximize children's participation in their child care programs. One effective strategy is "finding another way." This strategy helps all children discover that there are many ways of doing things, thereby developing a sense of creativity and acceptance of diversity. For children with disabilities, finding another way means that their different way of communicating, their use of a helping tool to move, or their need for different rules to follow will be accepted by other children and integrated into the class room routine.

Early childhood care providers can help children learn about diversity through many activities during their normal daily routine. The following suggestions may help stimulate "finding another way:"

- provide a variety of materials (different textures, weights, shapes) for open-ended activities;
- include different props in the housekeeping corner, including adaptive utensils, braille menus and other helping tools;
- encourage children to find their own way to move during dancing, obstacle courses, and other gross motor activities;
- make available a range of riding toys, including child-sized crutches and wheelchairs, during outside play.

By providing learning opportunities which encourage diversity of responses among children, early childhood care providers are creating a nurturing and accepting environment that is not only developmentally appropriate for all the children in the group but also developmentally appropriate for each individual child.

For more information contact:
Margaret C. O'Hare, Project Director
First CHANCE
3 Randolph Street
Canton, MA 02021
(617) 828-7497

Out of the Mou... Child Initi...

Maintaining a normal early childhood setting while addressing the unique needs of children with disabilities is a challenge all designers of quality inclusive settings must face. The Community Integration Project, and its predecessor Project APIP, have addressed this challenge by utilizing child-initiated themes as a pivotal programmatic variable. The CIP thematic approach incorporates best-practice from early childhood regular and special education. NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice, such as a whole child approach, teaching from the interests of the learner and relevant and meaningful activities are an integral part of child-initiated themes. Specific teaching strategies which assist many children with special needs are embedded within the CIP thematic approach. These include:

"Themes focus on the content of the children's immediate lives and experiences"

- consistency and repetition of topic and vocabulary, allowing for "overteaching over time;"
- topics which are familiar and relevant to the children, enabling children to build on information they already possess;
- activities that simulate life outside the classroom, facilitating skill generalization.

CIP defines a child-initiated theme as a topic, subject, or experience of high interest to a group of

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Helping Early Interventionists Serve Children with Challenging Behaviour: An Inservice and Technical Assistance Model

There is a strong consensus that providing services for children with disabilities in inclusive educational environments is critical. Unfortunately, children with challenging behaviors are often not readily included (Giangreco & Putnam, 1992). Challenging behavior has been defined as "behavior emitted by a learner that results in self-injury of others, causes damage to the physical environment, interferes with the acquisition of new skills and/or socially isolates the learner" (Doss & Reichle, 1989).

The goal of our Technical Assistance Project, Developing and Evaluating a Model of Inservice and Technical Assistance to Prevent Severe Challenging Behavior in Preschool Children (Mary McEvoy & Joe Reichle, Principal Investigators), is to assist public school districts in the development of transdiciplinary technical assistance teams. These teams can provide longitudinal consultation and assistance to educators in the treatment and prevention of severe challenging behavior in preschool children.

Within a school district, team members are selected to represent a variety of disciplines (i.e. early education, psychology, speech/language pathology). The team members are released for 5-10 hours per week to work on the team.

The teams meet weekly to discuss referrals and design specific interventions. For example, a teacher may be having a problem with a young child who rapidly moves from activity to activity, disrupting or hitting other children. A technical assistance team member would talk to the teacher about the problem and directly observe the child during transition periods. The direct observation may indicate the activity areas are too large with too many material choices. After discussing this information, team members might make a recommendation to the teacher that s/he rearrange the room to limit activity space, place teachers in closer proximity to children, and rotate toys or materials on a more frequent basis to encourage engagement. Team members assist the teacher with implementation of the intervention and are available for ongoing assistance with evaluation and suggestions for any necessary intervention.

In summary, the technical assistance teams work with parents and teachers to design proactive, user-friendly and effective interventions to help assure successful inclusive opportunities for children who exhibit challenging behaviors. Team members provide training, feedback, consultation, and ongoing evaluation for suggested interventions. In addition, the technical assistance team members are available to provide inservice training on such topics as intervention development, interdisciplinary collaboration, and inclusion.

For more information contact:
Elisabeth Lodge Rogers
The University of Minnesota
215 Pattee Hall
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 624-5547

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Giangreco, M., & Putnam. (1992) Regular education environments. In L. Meyer, C. Peck, & L. Brown (Eds.), *Critical issues in the lives of people with severe disabilities* (pp. 245-270). Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Doss, L. S., & Reichle, J. (1989). Establishing communicative alternatives to the emission of socially motivated excess behavior: A review. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 14*, 101-112.

...gs of Babies . . .
...d Themes

children. Themes focus on the content of the children's immediate lives and experiences. They most often evolve from the staff's careful observation of the children. By noting the children's main topics of discussion and watching children during spontaneous play activities, staff are able to identify meaningful themes. Preschoolers suggest themes in various ways including asking questions, sharing thoughts about their lives, sharing an item from home, and showing a strength.

When implementing the child-initiated theme approach, the theme must be:

- addressed throughout the daily routine;
- reflected in the choice of materials available in the classroom;
- constant for a minimum of one week, guaranteeing repetition and extended learning opportunities.

Further discussion on utilizing child-initiated themes as a powerful teaching strategy for children with and without disabilities in an inclusive preschool classroom can be found in ***Inclusive Early Childhood Education: A Model Classroom.***

For more information contact:
Lori Morris
The George Washington University
2201 G Street, NW, #524
Washington, D.C. 20052
(703) 836-0723

Abraham, M., L. Morris, & P. Wald (1993). ***Inclusive Early Childhood Education: A Model Classroom.*** Tucson, AZ: Communication Skill Builders.

Bulletin Board

Books

An Activity-Based Approach to Early Intervention
Diane Bricker and Juliann Woods
Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company
P. O. Box 10624
Baltimore, MD 21285-0624
1-800-638-3775

Inclusive Early Childhood Education: A Model Classroom
Marie Abraham, Lori Morris, & Penelope Wald
Communication Skill Builders
3830 E. Bellevue
P. O. Box 42050-E 93
Tucson, AZ 85733
(602) 323-7500

Integrating Young Children with Disabilities into Community Programs
Charles Peck, Samuel Odom, & Diane Bricker
Paul H. Brooks Publishing Company
P. O. Box 10624
Baltimore, MD 21285-0624
1-800-638-3775

Preschool Integration Network Handbook
The Family Child Learning Center
90 W. Overdale Drive
Talmadge, OH 44278

Videos

Video Training Programs
Educational Productions, Inc.
7412 S. W. Beaverton Hillsdale Highway, Suite 210
Portland, OR 97225
1-800-950-4949

Projects

Juliann Woods Cripe
Project KITS: Kansas Inservice Training System
Kansas University Affiliated Program
2601 Gabriel
Parsons, KS 67357
(316) 421-6550 Ext. 1767

Mary Ellen Hoy
Family Child Care Integration Project
Danny Chitwood Early Learning Institute
2280 N. Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311

Sarah Rule
Integrated Outreach for Utah Project
Center for Persons with Disabilities
Utah State University, UMC 6845
Logan, UT 84322-6845
(801)750-1991

If you would like to be a part of the ***Inclusion Forum*** by contributing information or serving as a resource to other programs, please send a brief program description along with a contact name & telephone number to:

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Dept. of Teacher Preparation
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524 Funger Hall
2201 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052

Published by the Community Integration Project

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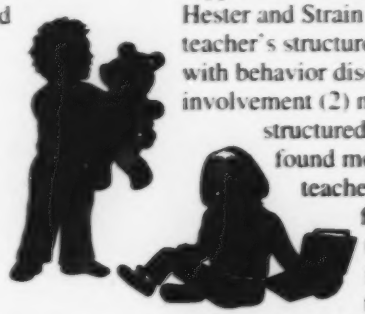
Autumn/Winter 1993 Vol. 1, No. 2

SPOTLIGHT ON THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Tips for Inclusive Settings

Optional environments for inclusive early childhood settings — where to begin? Most educators would agree that the developmentally appropriate practice guidelines offered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Bredekamp, 1987) set the stage for quality inclusive programs. Recommended environmental practices such as well-defined activity areas, clearly labeled shelves, accessible materials, and an established daily routine, "provide the context of appropriate practices for children but are often not sufficient for meeting the specific needs of children with disabilities" (Graham and Bryant, 1993, p. 32). Environmental adaptations are often needed to maximize the capabilities of children with special needs.



A frequent problem for children with disabilities is engaging in purposeful play. McGee and colleagues (1991) suggest toy rotation as a possible environmental adaptation to promote engagement. "Engagement depends on both the novelty and the appeal of materials in the environment . . . A systematic plan of toy rotation provides variety for students while eliminating the burden of relying on teacher judgment, memory and time (p. 44)." Developing a system for toy rotation begins with the coding of materials according to dimensions such as thematic focus, developmental level, sensory quality and isolate vs. social toys. Materials are then organized into multi-dimensional sets which address a variety of abilities and interests, and are placed in appropriate activity areas on a rotating basis. Myhre (1993), in her article on prop boxes, extends the idea of toy rotation to the dramatic play area. Prop boxes are a collection of costumes, equipment, and expendables that transform the dramatic play area into a pretend setting such as a restaurant or beauty shop.

With novel materials available in the activity areas, it is time to consider how these materials could best promote interaction among the children. Are children more likely to interact with each other if the materials are simply plunked into the centers, or if activities are structured to help them use the new materials? DeKlyen and Odom (1989) examined the influence of teacher-imposed structure on children's interactions. Structure was defined by the degree to which the teacher introduced the activity, established the rules, provided the materials and assigned the roles. The study found that children interacted with one another more frequently in highly structured activities. These results supported the findings of a previous study by Shores, Hester and Strain (1976) which examined the effect of teacher's structure on the social interaction of children with behavior disorders, i.e., (1) direct teacher involvement (2) no teacher involvement or (3) teacher-structured play. Subjects in both studies were found most likely to interact with their peers in teacher-structured conditions. Both studies found that direct involvement of the teacher in the activity negatively impacted the social interaction among the children. This emphasizes the importance of having the teacher structure the activity and then remove herself from the group.

This article has presented environmental tips for maximizing children's engagement in play and social interaction. A review of the articles referenced below will provide you with additional ideas for creating optimal inclusive early childhood environments.

—Penny Wald
Community Integration Project
The George Washington University

Bredekamp, S. (1987). ***Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Eight.*** Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

DeKlyen, M. & Odom, S. (1989). Activity structure and social interactions with peers in developmentally integrated play groups. ***Journal of Early Intervention 13 (4): 342-352.***

Graham, M.A. & Bryant, D.M. (1993). Developmentally appropriate environments for children with special needs. ***Infants and Young Children 5 (3): 31-42.***

McGee, G. G., Daly, T., Izeman, S. G., Mann, L. H., and Risley, T. R. (1991). Use of classroom materials to promote preschool engagement. ***Teaching Exceptional Children 23 (4): 44-47.***

Myhre, S. M. (1993) Enhancing your dramatic-play area through the use of prop boxes. ***Young Children 48 (5): 6-11.***

Chores, R.E., Hester, P. & Strain, P. S. (1976). The effect of amount and type of teacher-child interaction on child-child interaction during free play. ***Psychology in the Schools 12: 171-175.***

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FAMILY CHILD CARE INTEGRATION PROJECT
Less Is Best

Family child care offers parents of young children an appealing alternative to center-based care. Many parents prefer a home setting for their infants and toddlers with special needs. The Family Child Care Integration Project (FCCIP) prepares family child care providers to include children with special needs in their homes. The FCCIP is grounded in a belief that quality, developmentally appropriate practice is best for all young children. The project unites the staff of a center-based program that includes children with special needs with a group of family child care providers in a unique partnership for inclusion.

Training begins with a workshop on creating environments that promote children's active learning. Providers learn strategies that foster inclusion of children with special needs in active learning environments. These strategies are guided by the principle that **less is best — environments should be adapted only to the extent necessary to meet a child's needs.** The child needs access to the toys and learning materials in the home, and she needs to use these materials in ways that enable her to "blend in" with the other children (The Family Child Learning Center, 1991).

When center staff visit providers to help them implement active learning environments, creative adaptations guided by the principle that "less is best" benefit all children in care. Providers sort materials into clearly labeled bins, and organize bins and larger toys in distinct play areas. Some adaptations that have occurred during the FCCIP are:

- ❑ rearrangement of furniture to allow space for children with walkers to access toys and materials
- ❑ textured labels for children with visual disabilities
- ❑ concrete labels (e.g. a Duplo taped to a bin of Duplos) for children with cognitive delays
- ❑ homemade books in the book area that include pictures of children and adults with disabilities
- ❑ tricycle handlebars used to support a child with gross motor delays as he or she learns to walk
- ❑ a spoon handle wrapped in duct tape for a child with cerebral palsy to grasp

Strategies like these pave the way for the inclusion of children with special needs in FCCIP family child care homes. They represent simple, effective, and affordable adaptations of the home environment.

For more information contact:
Mary Ellen Hoy, Director
Family Child Care Integration Project
The Danny Chitwood Early Learning Institute
2280 N. Beauregard Street
Alexandria, VA 22311
(703) 820-6461

The Family Child Learning Center (1991) ***The Preschool Integration Handbook.*** Tallmadge, Ohio.

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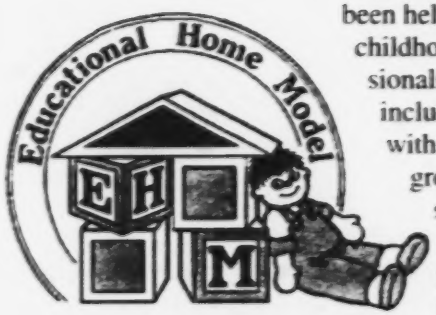
EDUCATION HOME MOD
Take The Toys



EHM Outreach has been helping early childhood professionals successfully include children with disabilities in group care settings since 1987. The project provides a forty hour training curriculum and on-site technical assistance designed to teach the skills and the strategies needed to meet the challenge of caring for children with disabilities.

When a young child enters a preschool or child care program, the environment should speak directly to the child. The child needs to receive information about what to play and perhaps even how to play with the materials and equipment available.

So take the toys off the shelves and arrange them to give a clear play idea — arrange toys to illustrate an action that can be easily understood by the child. A stuffed animal sitting in a doll's chair with a spoon nearby, for example, might suggest a play idea for the child. That "message" could become even clearer if the spoon were balanced on the animal's arm as if

Project Coach Outreach
Adaptations To Maximize Participation

Project Coach Outreach provides training in coaching and consultation skills in order to increase inclusive, community-based services for preschoolers with disabilities in Mississippi. This project is founded in the belief that children with disabilities can be successfully included in early childhood programs when staff are supported with carefully planned and skillfully delivered coaching and consultation.

Project Coach Outreach works with Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to encourage the adoption of this service delivery model in settings such as Head Start, preschool and child care centers. The LEAs provide community programs with consultants from the various disciplines, who in turn assist in the classroom, coach and collaborate with individual staff members and the team as a whole.

As the project has gotten underway, we've been impressed by the teachers' ingenuity in adapting materials to meet the varied needs of their students. A material we've seen used in multiple ways is plastic tubing available at hardware stores. For example, lengths of narrow tubing added to a set of stringing beads accommodate varied fine motor skills. Or a two foot length of wide clear tubing, almost filled with colored water and sealed with corks, becomes a bubble tube. One child works to make the bubble move by raising one end, while another child experiences range of motion exercises. Opaque tubing and tube connectors make hoops of varied sizes, ranging from small ring toss hoops to large hoops used to designate individual play spaces.

Other material adaptation ideas include gluing the picture pieces for matching/lotto games on small ceramic tiles to make them easier to pick up; mounting lids of magic markers on a board so markers can be opened without having to grasp and remove the lid; and replacing puzzle knobs with pipe cleaners so the puzzle pieces can be easily removed from the frame. These material adaptations have been carefully designed to support the successful participation of children with varying skills in inclusive programs.

For more information contact:
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Project Coach Outreach
Institute for Disability Studies
The University of Southern Mississippi
Box 5163
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5163

...Outreach Project ...
...ff The Shelf

eating. This arrangement does three things: First, it gives an immediate idea to act on so that the child can quickly get down to the business of playing. Second, this strategy is similar to saying "Why don't you try to feed the teddy bear some breakfast?", but you are using the environment to give the message, and teaching the child to look for play cues from their surroundings instead of from adults. Third, the child will be encouraged to participate in a play scheme that might be more sophisticated than one he or she would have thought of independently — the materials you select and the arrangement you provide can help the child interact more fully with the materials.

When you take the time to arrange materials to promote independent play instead of leaving them on the shelves, the message could very well change from one of "What do I do now?" to "I have a great idea!"

For more information contact:
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Project Director
Educational Home Model Outreach Project
52 N. Corbin Hall
University of Montana
Missoula, MT 59812
(406) 243-5467

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Bulletin Board

Books

The Creative Curriculum for Early Childhood
Diane Trister Dodge
Teaching Strategies, Inc.
P. O. Box 42243
Washington, D.C. 20015

The Preschool Integration Handbook: A Daycare Provider's Reference for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities
The Family Child Learning Center
Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron
90 West Overdale Drive
Tallmadge, Ohio 44278

Early Intervention in Natural Environments: Methods and Procedures
Mary Jo Noonan and Linda McCormick
Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.
Wadsworth, Inc.
Belmont, CA 94002

Instruments for Assessing Environments

The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale. 1989.
Harms T., Cryer D., & Clifford R. M.

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale. 1980.
Harms T., Clifford R. M., & Cryer D.

The Family Day Care Rating Scale. 1989.
Harms T., & Clifford R. M.

All the above published by: Teachers College Press.
1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027

Special Needs Items for the ECERS
Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center,
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Journal Articles

Graham, M., & Bryant, D. (1993). Developmentally appropriate environments for children with special needs. ***Infants and Young Children*** 5 (3): 31-42. (Published by Aspen Publishers, Inc.)

Trawick-Smith, J. (1992). The classroom environment affects children's play and development: Review of research. ***Dimensions on Early Childhood*** 21 (2): 27-30.
(Published by the Southern Association on Children under Six)

Video

Setting Up the Learning Environment
High/Scope Press
600 N. River Street
Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898
(313) 485-2000

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